

A STUDY OF HOW SELECTED PUBLIC SCHOOL JUNIOR-HIGH STUDENTS PERCEIVE
THE AFFECT OF POPULAR MUSIC ON CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study is to further the understanding of how junior-high students in the public schools perceive the affects of popular music on their behavior in the classroom. Two primary research questions serve as the foundation for this study. The first question investigates how themes disclosed in interviews of selected public school junior high students help to explain their personal perceptions of how popular music affects their behavior in the academic environment. The second question seeks to determine whether students that listen to a particular genre of popular music have different or similar perceptions of how music affects their behavior than their peers'.

The Deposit Middle School, a rural public school in upstate New York, was chosen as the location to explore these research questions. A mixed methods approach was implemented in the research methodology using a two-phase sequential explanatory design. First, a quantitative questionnaire was distributed to each participant that evaluated popular music listening habits as well as their perceptions of how popular music affects both their personal behaviors and their classmates' behaviors during school. Each participant was then subjected to a qualitative interview where they were given an opportunity to more thoroughly explain the beliefs shared on the questionnaire.

Only 58% of participants in this study believed that listening to popular music affects their behavior in school. However, 84% of students surveyed believed that their classmates' behaviors were affected when they listened to popular music. Students that listened to popular music for more than three hours per day were more aware of its affect on their behavior during the academic day than those who listened less. The most frequent theme that emerged during the interviews was that listening to popular music affects an individual's personality traits in the

classroom. This idea led many participants to disclose that their classmates' behaviors often replicate actions that are portrayed in the songs they listen to. Most of these mirrored behaviors were considered negative or “bad.” Other reports indicated that students who listen to popular music become emotionally aligned with its lyrics and overall mood. When students were asked to report their favorite popular music genre, a total of nine styles were reported including pop, country, hip-hop, rap, rock, punk, rhythm-and-blues (R&B), alternative, and grunge. No similarities or differences were detected between how students perceive popular music to affect classroom behavior and the students' most favorite reported genres.

Junior-high students in the public schools are in fact exposed to popular music for many hours each day. While not all popular music contains negative or violent themes, many do. When parents, teachers, and administrators become more aware of how the themes in popular music are perceived by students, strategies can then be formulated to aid students in more appropriately consuming music.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Previous studies have suggested a correlation between popular media and behavior. One study concluded that popular music substantially influences early adolescents and even more so when there is little parental supervision at home (Pearson 2006). Another study concluded that youth who associate themselves with specific genres of music were more likely to behave in certain ways and experience a variety of internalized problems (Mulder *et al.* 2007). At the same time, many other researchers have prolifically written about the diminishing nature of public school discipline (Adams 2000, Nichols 2004, Toby 2007).

As popular music has become increasingly tainted with negative messages, inappropriate behavior in the public schools has also been on the rise. Educators consistently struggle with finding a balance between teaching their curriculum and managing deviant students in their classrooms. Investigating how students in the public schools perceive the affect of popular music on behavior may provide a clearer understanding of why these students are engaging in negative conduct during school.

The behavior of students in a classroom is often times dependent upon their moods. An individual's emotions have been proven to be regulated by the music that they listen to (Saarikallio and Erkkilä 2007). Since music has the ability to control the mood of students in a classroom setting, great potential exists for teachers, administrators, parents, and students to utilize this medium to improve the academic environment.

While much research has pursued the correlation between popular media and behavior as well as increases in negative student behavior, almost none suggest solutions to improve the behavior or to reverse its effects. The fact that a correlation between the two variables exists is

not substantial enough to improve negative conduct in the public schools. Researchers may not be able to change what popular media portrays, but they may be able to alter how adolescents perceive these messages.

This study will appeal to all faculty and staff that work in the public schools. Educators will more clearly understand the relationship between popular music and their students' behavior. Administrators will be more equipped with the knowledge to implement strategic policies against deviant behavior. Support staff will be able to perform their duties in a more pleasant environment. Finally, parents will be more prepared to guide their children to understand and evaluate their own music listening habits.

The intent of this two-phase, sequential mixed methods study is to more closely understand how selected junior-high students in the public schools perceive the affect of popular music on classroom behavior. In the first phase, participants taking the general music course at Deposit Middle School, a small rural public school district in upstate New York, responded to quantitative research questions that addressed the relationship of popular music and behavior. Information from this first phase was explored further in a second qualitative phase. In the second phase, qualitative interviews were used to expand on the results obtained in the quantitative study by exploring aspects of the connection between music and behavior with students at Deposit Middle / Senior High School. The reason for following up with qualitative research in the second phase was to provide an opportunity for the students to express their perceptions of how popular music has influenced their behaviors in school (Creswell 2009, 122).

Many questions arose during the preliminary stages of this project that became the building blocks of its entire design. The following research questions were the most influential for the intentions of this thesis:

- How do public school junior high students explain how popular music affects their behavior in the academic environment?
- Do students that listen to a particular genre of music have different or similar perceptions than other students about how music affects their behavior?
- Does popular music listened to most often by students contribute to the frequency of disciplinary instances in the classroom?

Definitions

In this study, student deviant behavior will be defined as engaging in any behavior that is not consistent with the code of conduct in place in the Deposit Central School District (Appendix D). Examples of deviant behavior include insubordination (refusing to obey teacher instruction), truancy, fighting, inappropriate language, or inappropriate dress.

Defining popular music is a very complicated and complex task. Many genres continue to gradually evolve their definitions and are often deeply rooted in other “parent” genres. Casual listeners can easily mistake one musical genre for another if they are not familiar with the style. While defining specific genres of music was not an objective of this study, a brief description of each genre will provide some clarity as to what the students in this study report listening to.

Pop is “[a] term used widely in everyday discourse, generally to refer to types of music that are considered to be of lower value and complexity than art music, and to be readily accessible to large numbers of musically uneducated listeners rather than to an élite” (Middleton and Manuel n. d., *Popular Music*). Music in this genre is often very simple and does not contain complicated or confusing themes and content. This genre is highly commercialized and aims for mass audience appeal. Rock and roll is “[a] term sometimes used broadly to refer to the popular music of the second half of the twentieth century, but which often narrowly designates a style of

the 1950s...Rock and roll combined boogie-woogie rhythms, song forms and vocal styles from both the blues and Tin Pan Alley popular song, hillbilly yelping and the ecstatic shouts of gospel” (Walser n. d., Rock and Roll). Country music is “[a]n American style of popular music, the origins of which lay in the folksong brought by early settlers from the British Isles. Derived from the folk music of the isolated Appalachian regions, it has been transformed into a multi-million dollar industry by radio broadcasting” (Gammond n. d., Country Music).

Hip-hop is actually “[a] term embracing various aspects of black American cultural life, including rap, music created by DJs, graffiti art, and acrobatic break-dancing (‘breaking’). Since 1979 the term has tended to be most commonly associated with rap” (Gloag n. d., Hip-Hop). Therefore, the rap musical genre is an aspect of hip-hop, or American black culture. Rap music is another complex musical genre, however it is essentially “...characterized by semi-spoken rhymes declaimed over a rhythmic musical backing” (Toop, Cheney, and Kajikawa n. d., Rap). Even more complex to define than Rap is the musical genre R&B, or rhythm-and-blues. Rhythm-and-blues is “[a] term coined in 1949 to describe music marketed primarily to African-Americans. It was initially used by *Billboard* to replace the term ‘race records,’... Labels devoted to rhythm-and-blues... encompassed the whole spectrum of African-American music – blues, jazz, gospel music, popular vocal groups, and comedians” (Rye n. d., Rhythm-and-Blues). Hip-hop, rap, and rhythm-and-blues are all firmly rooted in and helped shape the African-American communities.

The alternative musical genre is “[m]usic that may be defined in opposition to other musics...‘alternative’ became roughly synonymous with the music played by college radio stations during the 1980s: popular music which operated on the fringes of the mainstream, often incorporating avant-garde or non-Western sounds or concepts” (Stilwell n. d., Alternative

Music). An offshoot of the alternative genre is grunge which became more prevalent in the early 1990s. Grunge "...retained the distorted guitar sounds and intensity of heavy metal but avoided its guitar solos and other signifiers of virtuosity. Similarly, grunge rockers and their fans avoided heavy metal's spectacularity of dress and appearance, preferring unfashionable clothes and unstyled hair" (Walser n. d., Grunge). The grunge musical genre was defined almost as much by the image of the musicians who played it as it was its musical elements. Punk rock can be defined as "[a]n aggressive style of rock that was part of a deeply contradictory movement initiated in London by Malcolm McLaren in 1975. Stylistic reverberations include grunge bands such as Nirvana and 1990s bands like Rancid, which are often hard to distinguish from thrash metal" (Moore n. d., Punk Rock). Punk rock exhibits striking similarities to the grunge genre except that it began several years earlier in England. Through personal experiences I have found that the most popular music among public school students is often not found on the top of the music industry's charts but rather those pieces by less prominent and more independent musicians.

One of the most obvious limitations of this study is the small sample size. Only students that are enrolled in grade seven or eight general music for the 2013 spring semester at Deposit Central School were included. While applying the results to a wider population is not appropriate, this study may provide future researchers and educators a baseline of information. This study is also limited by only observing the students' immediate perception of how popular music affects their behavior in school. Other researchers may be interested in replicating this study to determine if these perceptions change throughout the students' careers in school. This study also assumes that educators, administrators, and parents will be interested in the final

results. The conclusion of this study suggests possible action plans that could be implemented in the public school system to promote wise popular music listening choices by students.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This review of literature examines the relevant discussions relating to student exposure to and influence by popular media as well as general discipline in the public school system. One commonality among a majority of public school students today is a craving to listen to popular music. With conversations between students often revolving around popular music, its influence on their daily lives is evident. Examining the literature involving the influence of popular media on adolescents will provide a clearer picture of how they exactly perceive its affect on their behavior.

Students that consistently disrupt classroom lessons or are sent out of the room due to inappropriate behavior hamper the educational process for all those involved. Teachers lose valuable teaching time due to the constant need to focus on these individuals. Students in the classroom lose precious time originally intended for learning when disruptions occur.

Understanding how music influences all students in the classroom environment may possibly help school faculty and staff reduce the frequency of disciplinary incidents. More knowledge regarding the influence of music on students in the public schools may help gain a clearer understanding about how students perceive the affect of popular music on their behavior in the classroom.

Through the process of reviewing the relevant literature, two primary topics surfaced as being the most prominent: 1) popular media influence on behavior, and 2) general discipline in the public schools. A brief review of literature discussing the influence of popular media on behavior will be followed by a more thorough review of public school disciplinary procedures and methods.

Media Influence on Behavior

Adrian D. Pearson conducted a study entitled “Media Influence on Deviant Behavior in Middle School Students” with the intention of investigating the effects of popular media on middle school aged students in the public school setting. A twenty-five question survey that evaluated student susceptibility to popular media was issued to random students in the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades in a public school setting. Informal and formal interviews with students were also conducted with personal observations in the school taken into account.

The study concluded that popular media does have an influence on middle school aged students. The influence is even greater on students that have little parental supervision or involvement at home. Pearson states that “[t]he relation seems to be one of emulation of lifestyles and the admiration of their way of life, e.g. money, cars, and lavishness” (Pearson 2006, 49). Students outwardly wore certain clothes or clothing styles that directly copied what could be found in the mainstream media. Only minimal differences in questionnaire responses were found after analyzing the disciplinary records of the participants. Pearson observed that students consistently demonstrated acceptable behavior while on school grounds; students were then left to only show off their popular influence through “...clothes, certain phrases, certain unrealistic attitudes, and posturing/attitudes” (Pearson 2006, 50).

With the extensive amount of negative connotations in popular music, observers could hypothesize that there would be a positive correlation between student exposure to popular music and the amount of documented disciplinary infractions received in school. With children being exposed to an average of four hours of music every day (Arnett 1995, 519), the fact that Pearson did not receive responses that would support that assumption is surprising.

In the article “Adolescent’s Uses of Media for Self-Socialization,” Jeffrey Jensen Arnett takes a “uses and gratification” approach to discover how children and young adults choose the media and their contained messages rather than how the media directly affects them. Arnett lays out the foundation of his paper by stating that adolescents use media in five unique manners: entertainment, identity formation, high-sensation, coping, and youth culture identification (Arnett 1995, 521). Arnett continues by referencing his theory of broad and narrow socialization (Arnett 1995, 525). This theory is driven by the fact that “...there are seven principal sources of socialization: family, peers, school, community, the media, the legal system, and the cultural belief system” (Arnett 1995, 525). Broad socialization occurs when a culture promotes “individualism and independence” and narrow socialization is apparent when cultures attempt social conformity with little variance (Arnett 1995, 526). Arnett argues that there is intense confusion in adolescents between the messages portrayed by the extremely liberal media and the messages being instilled by family, the community, and the legal system (Arnett 1995, 526). The former tends to exhibit characteristics of broad socialization while the latter encourages adolescents to conform and follow the rules.

Arnett was able to conclude that “[a] common theme in the five uses of media specified...is that, in all of these respects, adolescents draw materials from media that contribute to their socialization” (Arnett 1995, 525). This fact, coupled with the naturally rebellious nature of adolescents while in the process of forming their identity, lends itself to producing conflict between the broadly socialized peer groups and media and the narrowly socialized school system. An ideal solution to this problem would be to have the popular media send only positive messages to the nation’s youth. This answer to the problem would help suspend the instilled confusion as discussed by Arnett and allow adolescents to more quickly realize their necessary

roles, responsibilities, and expectations sooner in life. However, this is an extremely far fetched and unrealistic goal. A more realistic solution would be to find ways which may aid adolescents sort out this confusion in a constructive and healthy manner, such as classes or afterschool activities on the subject.

In the article “Fresh Out Of School: Rap Music’s Discursive Battle With Education,” Wayne Au engages in a qualitative study of how education is discussed and portrayed in rap music. Twenty-eight song lyrics were selected from an online database that showcased popular rap music. This sample was then supplemented with nine other rap songs that referenced the educational system but that were not included in the database.

The results of this study suggest that rap lyrics often reference the educational system in a highly critical fashion. “The analysis reveals that from the perspective of rap music, the Discourse of education is largely dysfunctional when it comes to meeting the material, social, and cultural needs of African American youth” (Au 2005, 213). Au found that the referenced dysfunction in education is portrayed by rappers in two primary themes: “(a) Education is not useful... and (b) Education generally conflicts with rappers’ identities...” (Au 2005, 213). For example, Au explains that Kanye West's first album “...rejects the notion that college is necessary for personal success...[or] the only viable road to success for African Americans...” (Au 2005, 213). These lyrics are suggested to be a cry for help from African American youth living in the public school system and propose that educational reform must occur in order to reach this demographic more effectively.

From the perspective of an adolescent student in the public school system, hearing these conflicting messages must be highly confusing. The school faculty, local community, and the typical family all promote that going to school and receiving an education is useful and

necessary. However, as Au mentions, the educational system is consistently portrayed by rappers as “dysfunctional,” “not useful,” and completely “conflicting with the identity of the rapper.” This confusion may lead students to feel as if they are actively working against “the system” and that it will not provide what they envision is found in a successful lifestyle. For example, a student may feel that in order to obtain the lavish lifestyle portrayed by those in the popular media, performing and behaving well in school is not necessary. This unrealistic idea creates a misperception about how to obtain a realistic lifestyle.

Lynn Chosiad investigates how adolescent girls perceive the negative messages displayed in popular hip hop music in the article “Hip Hop Music and the Identity and Self-Esteem of Adolescent Girls.” Twenty-three girls that attended a public high school and claiming to be fans of hip hop music participated in the study. These girls “...listened to a popular hip hop song, watched a popular hip hop video, and were given lyrics of said song to read” (Chosiad 2008, 1). Each participant also completed questionnaires that investigated their demographics, role models, and their listening habits to hip hop music.

The results of this study found that adolescent girls really only hear negative messages in song texts when they can personally relate to them. “The songs do not serve as a guide for behavior, but as a description of a reality that reflects their own” (Chosiad 2008, 107). The participants also revealed that “...songs they liked the most and whose lyrics they paid the most attention to were songs in which they identified with the people in the songs, or in which the situations in the songs felt familiar” (Chosiad 2008, 110). Chosiad also found that the participants who listened to hip hop music with offensive lyrics acknowledged that the words and collected themes were in fact offensive (Chosiad 2008, 109). This conclusion is in contrast to the study’s prior assumptions. Socio-economic status tended to play a substantial role in how

the messages impacted the participants in the study. Middle-class girls were found to rarely relate to any of the topics or situations found in the lyrics. On the other hand, the girls belonging to the working class group found many more situations in the lyrics that they could relate to (Chosiad 2008, 111-12). One drawback to this study, as a hindrance to my own research, is that the participants were only high school girls. It would have been more convincing if Chosiad had investigated if boys in junior-high school would relate to the media in the same manner.

The fact that this study found that these girls did not always hear the negative messages portrayed in songs is quite striking. A major theme through this study was relevancy. Girls seemed to be impacted the most by the song's lyrics when they had experienced similar situations in their own lives. This contradicts the thoughts and beliefs of many people who think that negative messages in music are the primary cause of unwarranted and dangerous behavior. "...in an attempt to gain some sense of understanding about the motives for the perpetrators of the Columbine High School massacre, some concerned adults have attributed the violent behavior of the students to the rock musical lyrics expressed by Marilyn Manson" (Brown 2006, 51). This attribution of murderous behavior stemming from the lyrics of Marilyn Manson can be deflected by the findings in Louise Gray's article "Can Music Kill?" Gray analyzed the music that was prevalent during the early 1990s Rwandan genocide in order to find out if music was responsible for the mass killings. Gray argues that music in and of itself is not a direct cause of violent acts, "...but it can move people to kill, and music can be manipulated" (Gray 2009, 120). Relating this back to Chosiad's study, lyrics of songs will only impact adolescents if they already have some relational experience with the subject matter discussed in the songs.

In 2007 a team of scholars published a study titled "Music Taste Groups and Problem Behavior" in which 4,159 Dutch youth ages twelve to sixteen participated. "Multivariate

analyses showed that taste group membership is a relevant factor in explaining variance in psychosocial functioning, even when controlling for known predictors, such as gender, age, family affluence, school-level, school achievement, and social support from parents and friends” (Mulder *et al.* 2007, 321). The aim of this study was to discover if there were any correlations between musical tastes and problem behavior. The schools and students that were selected for this study were chosen randomly across the Netherlands. Students were asked to report on “...their personal and social characteristics, music preferences and social psychological functioning...” (Mulder *et al.* 2007, 313). Only participants that produced responses to all values in the Youth Self-Report (YSR) were included in the analysis. Based on their musical characteristics, four mainstream musical tastes emerged: “Rock,” “Urban,” “Pop-Dance,” and “Elite.”

After analyzing the massive collection of data, “...clear differences between taste groups emerged in the level of psychological problems they reported experiencing” (Mulder *et al.* 2007, 321) and several conclusions could be drawn. Adolescents who associated themselves with the elitist taste group reported high scores of trying to deal with problems without outside help. One idea for this occurrence was that since this group enjoys the music of their parent’s generation, they were not joining their peers in authoritative rebelling. This concept placed the adolescents in the elitist taste group more in isolation. Individuals that claimed they were not really involved with music, strongly enjoyed only two styles of music, or were in the elitist group reported lower scores of transgressive behavior and aggression than those in the urban, rock-pop, exclusive rock, or omnivore group (Mulder *et al.* 2007, 321).

Among all of the discussed conclusions, one broad theme emerged. Having an association with a musical taste group, or plainly identifying with certain styles of music, may

have an impact on overall problem behavior. Under this study, groups that enjoy certain music genres have less psychological problems than others. Many people may think that an easy solution to this correlation would be to encourage adolescents to like those music styles that portray fewer occurrences of problem behavior. However, individuals often tend to gravitate toward certain styles for reasons that cannot be changed or discouraged.

The study “Content Analysis of Tobacco, Alcohol, and Other Drugs in Popular Music” hoped to discover how many references to the use of or association with substances could be found in modern popular music. The 279 samples came from *Billboard* magazine’s rankings of the most popular music in 2005 such as the “Pop 100,” “Hot Country Tracks,” “Modern Rock Tracks,” and others. Lists targeting adult audiences were excluded. Multiple individuals trained in analyzing song texts were rallied to review the lyrics of each of these unique songs and document their occurrences.

Based on another study that reported adolescents listening to approximately 2.1 hours of popular music per day, the authors of this study were able to estimate that adolescents are exposed to approximately eighty-four substance references per day. This depends greatly on the genre that the listener is engaging with. Out of the sixty-two rap songs analyzed in this study, ninety percent contained some kind of substance reference. This varies greatly when compared to the thirty-five pop songs analyzed, only fourteen percent of them were found to reference substances in their lyrics. “Alcohol use was referenced most frequently, followed by marijuana use and use of other substances (illicit, prescription, or nonspecific substances)” (Primack *et al.* 2008, 172). An investigation of whether the correlations stated in this study promote these occurrences in society or if they are representative of references and usages already established would be interesting.

This study is pertinent to my research because public school students are highly exposed to popular music every day. “Because recent data indicate[s] that exposure to film smoking is one of the strongest risk factors for smoking initiation and progression, it is reasonable to hypothesize that exposure to substance use in music is also a strong risk factor for substance use initiation and progression” (Primack *et al.* 2008, 174). Regardless of the detailed specifics, adolescents are highly exposed to substance references expressed in the songs that receive the most airplay and purchases.

Discipline in Public Schools

In order to thoroughly investigate how students in the public schools perceive the affect of popular music on behavior, the context of public school disciplinary processes and statistics must be understood. Jackson Toby thoroughly breaks down the issue of public school discipline in his article “Getting Serious About School Discipline.” Toby explores why contemporary public schools experience more disciplinary issues than in previous generations and pertinent methods for reducing their frequency. Toby explains that many people attribute the reason for increasing disciplinary infractions to the observance that “...school discipline has become lax” (Toby 1998, 69). While a component of this deficiency may stem from lack of teacher preparation and classroom management skills (Varner 1999, 18-20), the entire blame cannot be placed on the public schools.

In the 1950s most students genuinely thought of school as an opportunity for success. Young learners knew that teachers cared about their behavior and would fear disapproval thus encouraging acceptable and responsible actions (Toby 1998, 69). This changed in the 1960s and 1970s when a substantial shift in social and cultural practices occurred as a result of the civil rights movement and objections to the Vietnam War (Toby 1998, 70). Presently many students

view the public school as a prison. A large surge in student enrollment (Adams 2000, 144) widened the teacher to student ratio and teacher authority began to slowly diminish. Public school administration has attempted to deal with disciplinary issues in multiple ways over the past fifty years. These methods have ranged from expulsion, in-school suspension (ISS), zero-tolerance, and more recently medicalization (Adams 2000, 144-49).

A rise in disciplinary issues can be traced to increasing the age of legal school attendance (Toby 1998, 80), a lengthier “due process” for unwarranted behavior (Adams 2000, 145), and teacher intimidation (Toby 1998, 76-8). More and more students no longer wish to remain in school. Factors contributing to this include individual rebelliousness, lack of familial support, and associations with other peer groups and cultures that have goals not aligned with academic achievement (Toby 1998, 70). These students that have little interest in receiving an education are a primary cause of disciplinary issues and end up remaining in school because they are legally obligated to do so (Toby 1998, 70-1).

After the civil-rights movement occurred in the United States, a greater concern for the rights of students emerged. “A generation ago, it was possible for principals to run schools autocratically and to suspend or expel students without much regard for procedural niceties...Student assaults on teachers were punished so swiftly that such attacks were almost unthinkable. Even disrespectful language was unusual” (Toby 1998, 73-4; Adams 2000, 144-45). However, this is no longer the case in contemporary public school disciplinary procedures. “...as a result of greater concern for the rights of children, school officials are required to observe due process in handling student discipline” (Toby 1998, 74). This course of action takes a much longer period of time to address serious issues that chronically occur in the classroom. Ultimately this process “...gives unruly students better protection against teachers and principals;

and it also gives the educational process less protection against disorder” (Toby 1998, 74).

According to the 1978 report by the National Institute of Education entitled *Violent Schools-Safe Schools*, students intimidate many teachers. Some teachers neglect confronting students for rule infractions due to fear. “Teachers themselves tend to downplay their disciplinary role. Some object to hall or cafeteria duty on the grounds that they are not policemen” (Toby 1998, 77). This is a major issue in the public schools. Since teachers are outwardly dismissing their enforcement of school rules, students are increasing their deviant behaviors because they realize they can easily escape consequences.

“An Exploration of Discipline and Suspension Data” by Joe D. Nichols analyzes the behavioral patterns within Highland Community Schools, a large public school district. Since substantial discussion has been taking place regarding equal consequences for inappropriate student behavior, this study focuses on the unequal disciplining of minority students. Nichols bases his analyses on the school district’s School Management and Resource Team (SMART) program that focused on thorough and accurate reporting of all behavioral incidents that occurred within a given school year. Each report contains detailed information regarding the type of infraction, the location where the incident occurred, and the consequence received. These accounts were sent to a central processing unit that then produced a final report detailing and making available statistics for each building principal. These summations were even further broken down and analyzed based on ethnicity and economic status.

An analysis of all reported incidents within the 1996-1997 academic school year reveals that forty percent of these occurrences were attributed to minority students. Since minority students make up only twenty-nine percent of the whole student population, this statistic suggests that minority students are reported for behavioral incidents at a disproportionate rate. The

modern school district's "zero tolerance" disciplinary policies have even been referred to as being racist (Adams 2000, 147). "Researchers have found evidence of disproportionate use of suspension all over the country, from Texas to Indiana. Child advocates are concerned that the disproportionate suspension of black and disabled students creates a 'school-to-prison' pipeline" (Sussman 2011, 29).

Nichols states that "...minority students remain twice as likely to either commit or be cited for a disciplinary action and twice as likely as majority students to receive out-of-school suspensions as a disciplinary consequence" (Nichols 2004, 419). The correlation between out-of-school and in-school suspension rates and socio-economic class is alarming. "The relationship between low income and poor behavior was not apparent for the Highland Community Schools as a whole or at the high school level alone, but was clearly seen at the elementary and middle school level where significant correlations were observed between out-of-school suspension events and economic status" (Nichols 2004, 419).

The students discussed in Nichols' article would be considered at-risk, or having a higher probability for behavioral issues, poor academic achievement, and early dropout rates. These characteristics of at-risk students are only symptoms of a greater underlying cause whether it is the socio-economic status or a perceived inequality because of being a minority. One possible factor that could contribute to worsening the symptoms of these students could be their choice of popular music. According to research, students tend to relate most to the lyrics in songs when they have personally experienced identical or similar situations in their own lives (Chosiad 2008). Students may begin to feel that since they relate to the broader themes in popular music such as belonging to a lower socio-economic class or identifying with a minority group, then

other messages in the same songs involving deviant behavior may be expected of them. This may be a contributing factor to a greater frequency of disciplinary referrals during school.

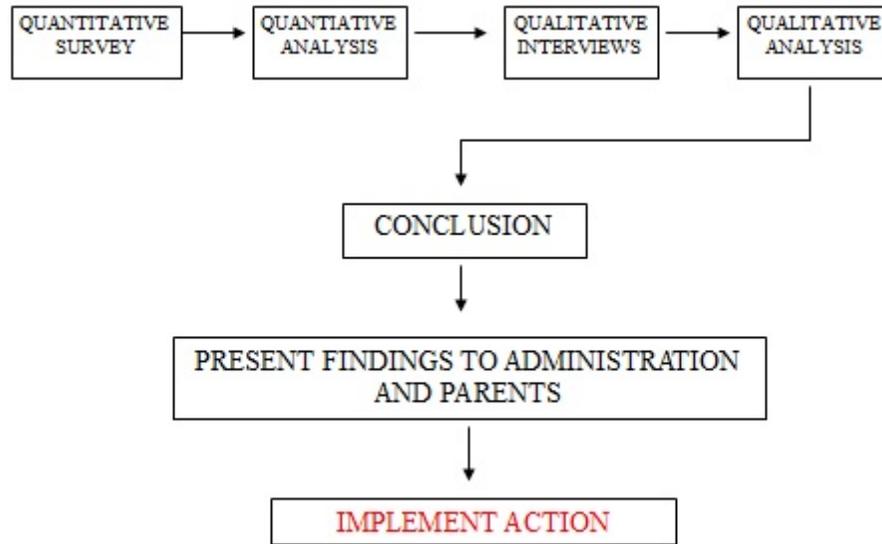
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The research for this study follows a mixed methods approach and implements a sequential explanatory design. First, a quantitative survey was distributed to all of the students in my junior high school general music classes. This survey created a baseline for the type of music listened to by the students, how often they listen to it, and if they feel these habits affect their behavior in school. After these surveys were collected and analyzed, the research moved into its qualitative second phase. This section of research included interviews with each student allowing them to elaborate on their answers from the quantitative survey.

The phases were placed in this particular sequential order for multiple reasons. First, I wanted to obtain honest answers from my students regarding their listening habits as well as genuine feelings regarding how they felt music affected their behavior. If the qualitative interviews were conducted first, the students may have felt their answers were “wrong” when engaging in the survey after the fact. The goal of this qualitative phase was to grasp a more complete understanding as to why the students felt music did or did not affect their behaviors.

The diagram below is a visual depiction of this research design. The plan utilizes a sequential explanatory design that progresses from quantitative survey collection and analysis through qualitative interviews and analysis. These portions of the design will all produce a solid conclusion about how the selected students in my study perceive that popular music affects their behavior in school. Eventually, the findings will be presented to the school building administration and parents to make them aware of the perceptions present in the school community. An action plan may be developed if deemed necessary after these parties review the results.



The fieldwork occurred within the setting of a public school district. This situation required approval by the building administrators, students participating in the project, and the legal guardians of the students. All participating parties were given a letter that fully explained the intent of this study as well as what was involved (Appendix C). This thesis focuses on how public school students perceive that popular music affects their behavior in school. Therefore, all students that were enrolled in grade seven or eight general music for the spring semester of the 2013 school year were eligible to participate in this study. Student or parental objections to participating in the study were acknowledged. The study was presented to the class as a curricular unit focusing on popular music. Since this unit was a part of their course work, students received a grade. The teacher clarified prior to the beginning of the unit that grades would only be awarded for participating in the study rather than homework, quizzes, or tests. This approach reduced the likelihood of students altering their true opinions in fear of receiving a lower grade. Students were also offered an incentive to participate in the study. Individuals who completed all requested tasks for the study would be allowed to skip two in-class journal entries without a penalty to their grade. Students that chose not to participate or were not allowed to

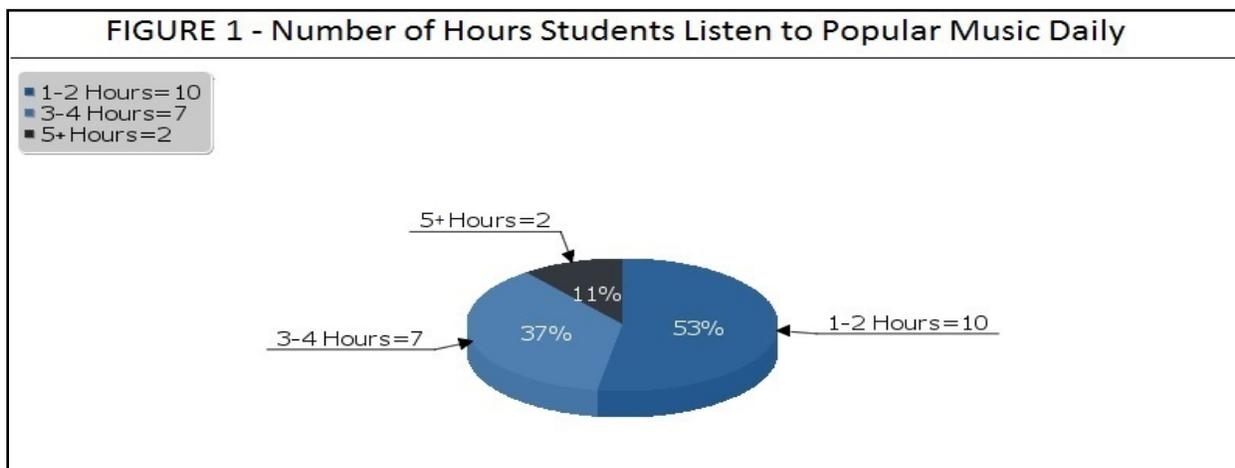
participate in the study were given an equal opportunity to receive the same incentive by accurately completing a music theory worksheet packet. All students participating in the study took a survey that inquired about their music listening habits, preferences, and how they perceived that the music affects their behavior in the classroom. All submitted surveys were equally evaluated and weighted the same in this study. These surveys were then analyzed to see if any prominent themes or correlations emerged. Formal interviews were then held with individual students in order to give them an opportunity to explain the answers submitted on the survey. The questions in the interview were designed to inquire in-depth about their perceptions. After the interviews were concluded, all data was compiled and analyzed with the intention of drawing formal conclusions about whether students truly perceive that the music they listen to affects their behavior in the classroom. These conclusions will be drafted into a mini-report that will be distributed to the school administrators and parents. The students who participated in the study were given the results verbally, followed by a classroom discussion on overall impressions as well as what exactly the conclusions mean to them personally. If administrators, parents, or students feel a need to implement action, such as training on appropriate responses to popular music, this will be arranged.

CHAPTER IV
RESEARCH FINDINGS

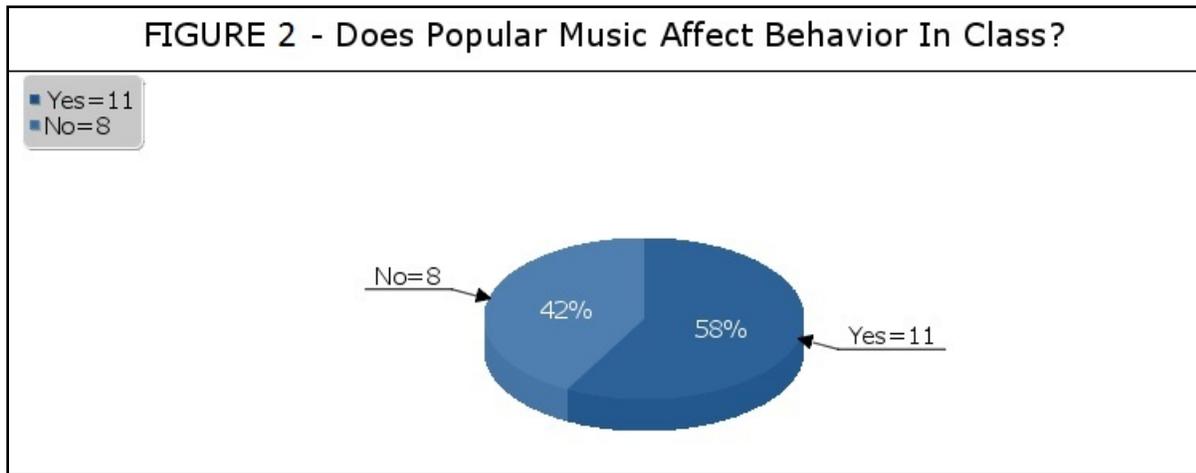
All students that were enrolled in the grade seven or eight general music course at Deposit Central School for the spring 2013 semester were eligible to participate in this study. Thirty-three students populated this course and all of them were invited to participate. After the initial invitation was extended, nineteen (58%) of the original thirty-three students turned in the consent forms and permission slips. Every participant (100%) that chose to participate followed through with the entire process and completed all requested tasks.

Questionnaire

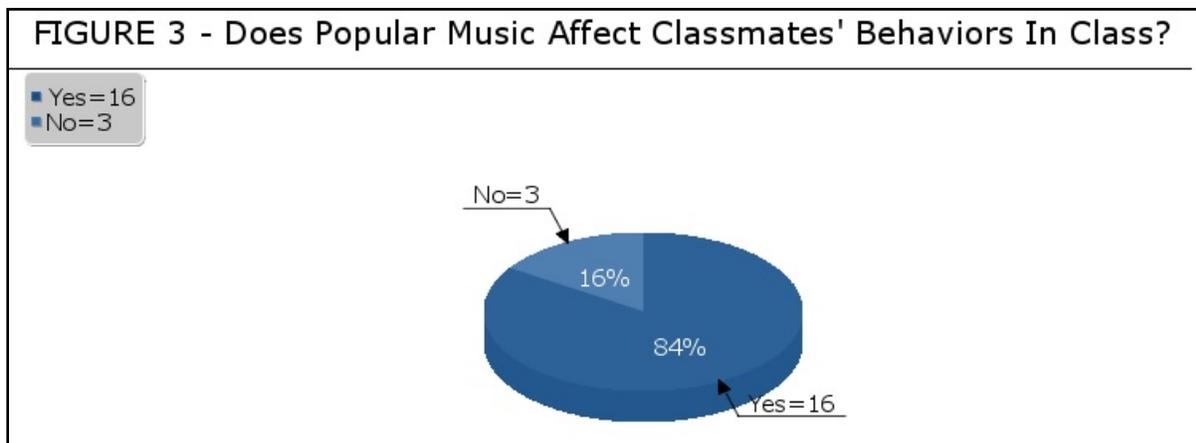
The first set of results comes from a five point questionnaire that was given to each participant at the beginning of the study. When asked how long students spend time listening to popular music each day (figure 1), ten students (53%) stated that they listened between one and two hours daily. This response was trailed by seven students (37%) who listened between three and four hours a day. Only two students (11%) reported listening to popular music five or more hours per day. No students reported listening to less than an hour of popular music every day.



Students were then asked whether or not they thought popular music affects their behavior in school (figure 2). This question had an almost even split between the participants. Eleven students (58%) testified that it does in fact affect their behavior during school while eight students (42%) claimed that it did not.



However, when the participants were asked if they thought their classmates' behaviors were affected in school when they listened to popular music (figure 3), sixteen of the nineteen students (84%) replied that they were.



Fifteen students (79%) claimed that listening to different styles of popular music have different effects on their behavior in school. Sixteen students (84%) also stated they believed their

classmates' behaviors in school were affected differently when they listened to different styles of popular music.

FIGURE 4 - Questionnaire

1) How often do you spend time listening to popular music each day (on the radio, iPod, CD player, internet, etc)?

- a) 0 hours
- b) 1-2 hours
- b) 3-4 hours
- c) 5 or more hours

2) Do you think that listening to popular music affects your behavior in school?

- a) Yes
- b) No

3) Do you think your classmates' behaviors in school are affected when they listen to popular music?

- a) Yes
- b) No

4) Do you think that listening to different styles of popular music (hip-hop, country, rock & roll, rap, etc) have different effects on your behavior in school?

- a) Yes
- b) No

5) Do you think that listening to different styles of popular music (hip-hop, country, rock & roll, rap, etc) have different effects on your classmates' behaviors in school?

- a) Yes
- b) No

Interviews

Following the completion of the questionnaire participants were given the opportunity to explain their responses to the questionnaire in greater depth through an interview (figure 5).

FIGURE 5 - Individual Participant Interview Script

- 1) On the questionnaire, you said that you (did / did not) think that your behavior in school is affected by listening to popular music. Why (or why not)?

- 2) On the questionnaire, you said that you (did / did not) think that the behavior of your classmates was affected by listening to popular music. Why (or why not)?

- ** If the answers to questions 2 and 3 on the survey differ from each other, ask the question below**
 - 2a) Why do you think that your behavior in school is affected by listening to popular music but not your classmates? (or vice versa)

- 3) On the questionnaire, you said listening to different styles of popular music (do / do not) have different affects on your behavior in school. How so?

- 4) On the questionnaire, you said listening to different styles of popular music (do / do not) have different affects on your classmates' behavior in school. How so?

- ** If the answers to questions 3 and 4 on the survey differ from each other, ask the question below**
 - 4a) Why do you think that your behavior in school is affected differently by different styles of popular music but not your classmates? (or vice versa)

- 5) What style(s) of popular music do you listen to the most?

- 6) What do the lyrics of your favorite popular songs talk about?

Students were first asked to explain why they believed popular music either did or did not affect their behavior in school. Participants reporting that popular music did affect their behavior produced responses for both positive and negative personal actions during the school day. The most frequent response for positive behavior change was feeling more relaxed after listening to popular music along with an increased ability to focus. Other positive behavior changes attributed to listening to popular music included feeling more energized and “ready to go” as well as an overall sense of being able to get through the school day.

Negative behaviors experienced personally by students were also reported. One participant indicated that she “gets out of character” when she listens to songs with expletive

lyrics or that contain inappropriate themes. Another negative behavior change from listening to popular music was described by a student who was at times reprimanded by the teacher for being disruptive when she sang tunes in class that were “stuck in her head.”

Another response that surfaced during the interviews that exhibited a behavior neither negative nor positive was that listening to popular music makes participants emotionally aligned with the music's projected theme or style. For example, students reported that if a song had very happy lyrics then they would feel happy throughout their school day. Students that listened to songs with sad lyrics, or if the tempos were slower, then they often felt sad or slower during the academic day.

Students that reported not being behaviorally affected by popular music during the school day defended their belief with various reasons. The most frequent response was that the participants do not care what the songs say to do; rather, they are “their own person” who can make their own choices that are not influenced by popular music. Other participants stated that the popular music they listen to is “just music” and has no influence on their behavior.

Participants were then asked to elaborate on why they either did or did not believe that their classmates' behaviors were affected when they listened to popular music. The most frequent reasoning in favor of classmate behavior change was that people are very passionate about their favorite music. Students continued to explain that when their classmates grow up listening to their favorite music, it affects the way they behave in school. Another frequent response indicated an observation involving the popular British boy band One Direction. Students explained that they often witness their classmates' behaviors change by “freaking out” when they listen to or discuss the band. Other participants stated that girls in particular that listen to One Direction are extra happy and cheerful.

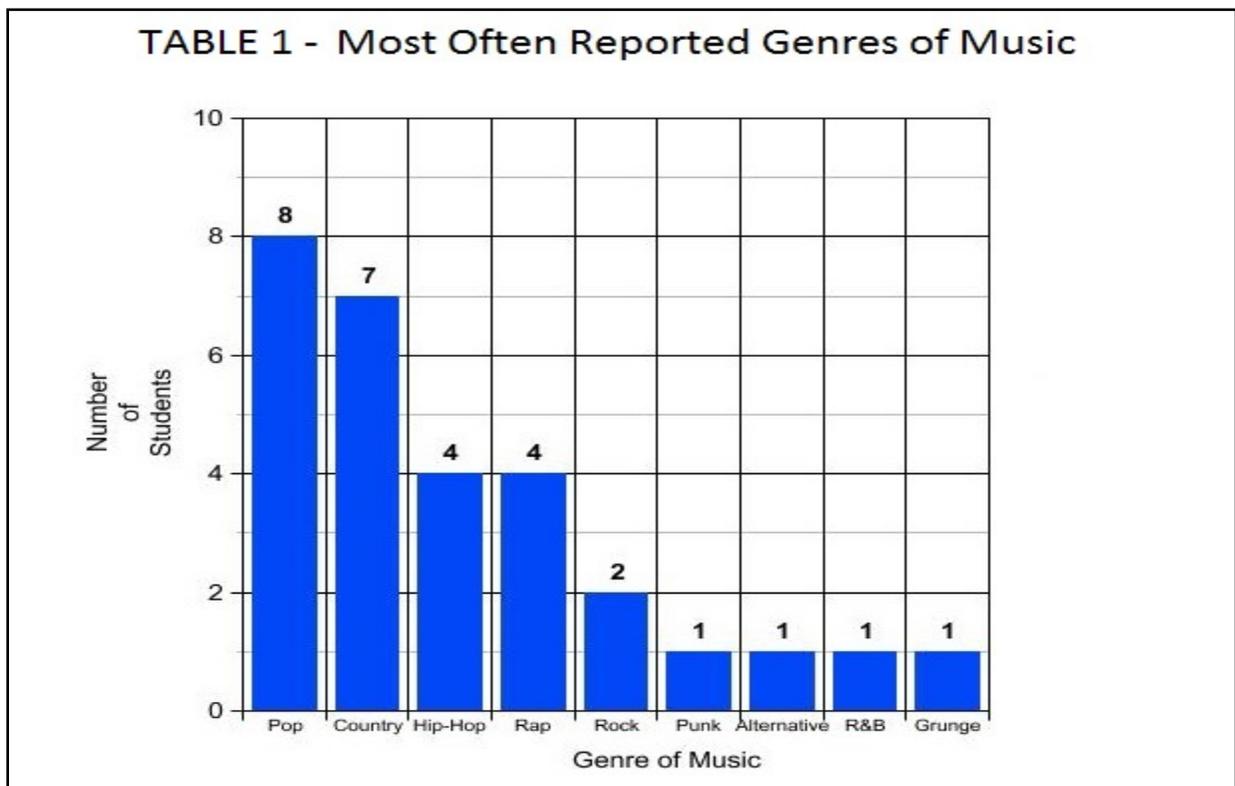
Next, participants were asked to elaborate on why they thought different styles of popular music (such as country, rock, hip-hop, pop, etc) had different effects on their behavior during school. The majority of the responses reflected the idea that their behaviors will reflect the style of music that they are listening to. For example, one student explained that she would act more “country” during school when she listens to country music. Another participant explained that listening to different styles of music brings out more of her personality during the school day. She continued to clarify that she feels more comfortable listening to country music because she loves to ride horses. A separate individual explained that engaging in different styles of popular music affects her extrovert/introvert behavior. She explained that when she listens to hip-hop she becomes noisier whereas when she listens to artists such as Taylor Swift she is quieter. Students also reported feeling that different styles of popular music would affect their energy during Physical Education class. For example, more aggressive music would make them perform better physically than songs that were less intense. Finally, another participant explained that he would often dress in clothes that reflected what he listened to on the radio or saw in music videos. Students reporting that different styles of popular music did not affect their behavior any differently claimed that they were going to act the same regardless of what music they listen to.

The next question during the interview asked the students to explain why they believed that their classmates' behaviors changed differently when they listened to different styles of popular music. One student explained that she personally witnessed her friend's behavior change after she switched from listening to country to hip-hop. Other students reported seeing their classmates become extra “pumped up” during Physical Education class when listening to different styles of popular music. Another participant gave an example that when classmates

listen to the popular song “Thrift Shop” by Macklemore and Ryan Lewis, they exhibit “cursing” behavior. Conversely, the classmates that listen to One Direction seem to have “nice” behavior.

These correlations bring up a very pertinent realm of questions. Were students drawn toward songs with expletive lyrics of negative themes because they were already engaging in these inappropriate behaviors to begin with or was it actually the content in the song itself which encouraged the student to change his/her behavior more negatively? The parameters of this study did not permit me to venture into investigating this problem. However, these would make excellent research questions for future studies.

Students were asked to share their favorite styles of popular music during the interview. Many students reported more than one favorite genre. Nine different genres were represented and are listed in descending order of frequency (table 1): pop, country, hip-hop, rap, rock, punk, rhythm-and-blues (R&B), alternative, and grunge.



The responses provided in the interviews regarding musical genres clearly indicate that the participants in this study are listening to a wide variety of popular music styles. No correlations between participants' favorite musical genres and other reported trends were found during the analysis of this study.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The influence of popular media on the middle school aged population group has already been firmly established (Pearson 2006). The vast majority of students in this study believe that their peers' behaviors are affected when they listen to popular music, but only 58% of the participants reported that their personal behaviors were affected. The results in this study suggest that there are a substantial number of students that do not perceive that popular music affects their behavior in school.

Several factors contributed to a small rate of participation by students in this study. First, involving children under the age of eighteen demanded that parents give consent for their child to participate. Permission forms had to be sent home for parents to read, sign, and return to the principal investigator. Just like any other homework assignment, some students forget that it needs to be completed or lose the form. Second, participation in this study was completely voluntary for the student and his/her parents. Despite offering incentives to participate in this study, many students exhibited evidence that they were not going to do anything more in my class than would be required. However, even with the low rate of participation, reasonable conclusions can be drawn.

These findings confirm that students in my sample are in fact listening to popular music everyday. The importance of listening to popular music in the lives of this specific student population is evident since all participants reported engaging in the activity for at least one hour each day. Even with this little exposure to popular music, individual students and their peers clearly perceive changes in behavior during the school day.

The themes that arose during the qualitative phase of this study proved useful in explaining how students perceive that popular music listening habits affect behavior during the academic day. The majority of participants conveyed evidence that they were aware of some sort of connection between popular music listening habits and behaviors during school. Some students believed that changes in behavior occurred only for their peers but not themselves. Other participants did in fact perceive that listening to popular music affected their personal behavior and that of their peers during school. One frequent theme emerging from the data was that popular music affects personality traits (outgoingness, conversing volume, etc). Another theme emerging from the data was an emotional alignment with the popular music such as feeling happier when listening to an upbeat song with positive lyrics or sad when listening to a slower song with negative lyrics. Another frequent theme revealed in the interviews was behaving similar to the negative themes in popular music.

If this emotional connection between music and behavior affects all students as described by the participants in my study, then music has a significant influence on the classroom environment. The overall demeanor of a classroom may become slower and less efficient if a depressing song were to become popular with the students in the class. However, if an upbeat song with positive and motivating lyrics were favored by all of the students in a classroom, the environment may become livelier with an increased ability to learn. Teachers equipped with this knowledge may be able to slightly improve the environment in their classroom by promoting appropriate popular songs with positive messages.

Other research questions also emerged throughout the course of this study that unfortunately could not be investigated due to the limitations of this project. Utilizing popular music to decrease disciplinary referrals in the public schools would be an excellent topic for

further investigation. School districts with a high percentage of students considered “at-risk” may be interested in continuing the exploration on how students with this classification perceive the affects of popular music on behavior differently than those who are not “at-risk.” Additionally, more research would need to be done on student perception of music and behavior before any interventions could be implemented that alters how students perceive popular music. Exploring any of these areas would greatly benefit the public school system and the students it serves.

A correlation between listening habits of popular music and disciplinary occurrences in the classroom were not quantitatively evaluated in this study. However, through the interviews with each student, a connection between the two factors appeared to be present. Students often reported inappropriate changes in behavior that would most likely become disruptive to the classroom environment throughout the day. For example, one participant revealed in the interview that their classmates evoke “cursing behavior” after listening to songs such as “Thrift Shop.” Another participant admitted to receiving consequences from teachers throughout the day for singing her favorite popular music songs during class. However, many students involved in this study reported changes in behavior caused by listening to popular music that seemed to occur in ways that would not disrupt the academic learning environment.

This study investigated whether or not students perceived any changes in behavior in themselves or their classmates specifically during the school day from listening to popular music. Every effort was made to encourage student responses that pertained only to behavior changes on school grounds. Since students often spend substantial time with their classmates both in and out of the academic setting, participants may have had a difficult time distinguishing when behavioral changes actually occurred. Evidently, students often reported behavior changes that

happened outside of school. While these responses did not directly relate to the study of classroom behavior changes, they do suggest that students in my sample perceive music affecting behavior in multiple settings.

After analyzing the data from the questionnaire, a correlation was detected between the number of hours listening to popular music and beliefs regarding whether or not the medium affects behavior during school. Of the eleven students that reported popular music affecting their behavior during school, 73% listened to three or more hours each day. 88% of the students that claimed popular music did not affect their behavior during school listened only one to two hours each day. This correlation suggests that students in this sample who listened to popular music for three or more hours each day were more aware of its affect on their behavior during the academic day. Students listening less than three hours were less cognizant of popular music affects on their behavior.

This correlation was unable to be investigated further in this study because it was discovered after the analysis was completed. One approach to expanding on the research questions in this study would be to more closely investigate the correlation between the number of hours students spend listening to popular music and the awareness of its affect on student behavior. The results produced from a study focusing on that research question would give individuals involved in junior-high public school education a clearer understanding of how students are affected by listening to popular music.

Students, parents, teachers, administrators, and anyone affiliated with the Deposit Central School District can effectively use the results of this study to guide students in the classroom. First, students need to be made aware of what actually affects their behaviors. Students in the schools are often aware of common factors that influence the overall behavior of an individual

such as how they are raised at home and who their friends are. However, popular media also is a significant factor in influencing a student's overall behavior. Making this information available to students will help them make wise choices when consuming popular music. Students who consume more appropriate music may contribute to an optimal school environment.

Second, parents of these students also need to be educated on the same information given to their children. This information will help them make informed decisions regarding how they may choose to parent their children. Further, parents equipped with this study's results will be able to more effectively monitor their child's behavior by either consenting or objecting to their children's popular media purchases or possessions.

Third, public school educators in both the music and non-music classes can directly influence their students' behaviors. Many teachers often play popular music in the background during less structured classroom time in an effort to calm their students or make them feel more relaxed. Teachers do not need to aid in negatively changing their student's behaviors by exposing them to popular media with negative themes. This practice only increases their exposure to music that may poorly impact their behavior. I would recommend that all teachers make a valiant effort to become more aware of the type of music they expose their students to during class. One suggestion for improving the activity would be to create a "classroom music playlist" at the beginning of the year. Students would be allowed to submit suggestions of their favorite popular music songs to be included in the playlist. The teacher would evaluate each song for its appropriateness and then approve a final list that could be played during class. New songs that are released after the approval of the list could be suggested to the teacher for inclusion. This strategy would retain the original goal of calming and relaxing their classroom and allow the

students to listen to their favorite popular music, yet not aid in promoting the dissemination of negative behaviors in the public schools.

The potential to utilize the results of this study outside the environment of Deposit Central School is also present. Other rural public schools in the Southern Tier of New York State would serve a student body with similar backgrounds and that listens to a majority of the same music. Teachers in these school districts could utilize the results of this study to shape classroom discussions and lesson plans. Such discussions could be focused on how popular music is consumed by other students in their age group as well as how listening to popular music might influence their behaviors in the classroom. Teachers in other local schools have the opportunity to create lesson plans based on the results of this study. For example, one lesson could involve students hypothesizing about possible answers to this study's research questions followed by the teacher revealing the actual results. Students would then compare their hypotheses with the real results and discuss the similarities and differences.

Applying the results of this study to other school settings would be inappropriate in many situations. Deposit Central School District is one of the smallest public schools in Broome County, New York. School districts that serve a substantially larger student population, such as in urban or suburban areas, would contain a more diverse student body with many more musical tastes and backgrounds. Schools located in a different region of the United States would also not be able to utilize the same data from this study because the students would be consuming vastly different music in a completely separate context. Other schools that appear in a similar context as Deposit Central School but are unique due to some other exceptional circumstances would also not expect the same results to be produced from their districts. Researchers expanding on the

research questions in this study, as well as music teachers utilizing this data, should exercise caution in these respects.

The small sample size in this study was one limitation that hindered any broad generalizations from being proposed. Replicating this study with a larger sample size would allow researchers to draw more complete conclusions regarding the research questions and apply the results across a larger population. Researchers could make recommendations to a large number of public schools after substantial conclusions have been established from a more densely populated sample pool. The recommendations that would most impact the student body and classroom environment include types of music played during physical education classes, genres of music chosen by band and choir directors, or whether or not to allow students to listen to personal media at all while on school grounds. Using the culminating data collected from a large sample size, researchers could also create specialized lesson plans and units to be taught in the public schools. Teachers of junior-high general music classes need quality popular music units that educate their students about how popular music affects their behaviors not only in school but throughout their lives.

Behaviorist researchers may also be interested in expanding on this study to investigate which direction the behavioral influences flow. Does the behavior of a student change because of the content they are exposed to when listening to popular music? Or is a student drawn towards musical content that aligns with behaviors that have already been established? These questions were unable to be answered in this study, but the answers may aid in creating strategies to address the issue of poor student discipline in the public schools today.

Work must be done to increase the percentage of students that are aware of the affects of popular music on their behavior. With only 58% of this study's participants aware of these

affects, the remaining 42% of the sample may continue to ignorantly listen to popular music without even knowing that their behaviors are slowly being altered. Popular music is not going to go away nor diminish its presence among this generation's youth. Learning how to effectively navigate the popular music realm as it is produced and distributed is a skill becoming increasingly imperative.

Preliminary conclusions were drawn from this study that can serve as a starting point for other researchers studying perception of music on behavior. Many studies have shown causal relationships such as the impacts of negative themes in popular music on adolescents. However, perceptions toward these mediums are just as important. Understanding how students perceive certain actions affect themselves can aid in formulating strategies to combat the disciplinary issues running rampant in the public schools today.

APPENDIX A



DEPOSIT CENTRAL SCHOOL

Christopher R. Mc Allister
Director of Bands
cmcallis@deposit.stier.org

171 Second Street
Deposit, NY 13754

Date: April 19th, 2013

Dear Parent / Guardian:

As your child's teacher for the class general music and also as a graduate student in the Ethnomusicology department at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for my degree. I am writing to request permission for your child to participate in my study.

If you choose to participate, your child will be asked to complete a short questionnaire regarding his or her popular music listening habits. After the questionnaire is complete, your child will be given the opportunity to more completely express their ideas and opinions in a brief interview with me. It should take approximately one cumulative class period during General Music for your child to complete the procedures listed. Your child's name and identifying information will be requested as part of your participation.

An informed consent document (permission form) is attached to this letter. To allow your child to participate, please sign the informed consent document and have your child return it to me **no later than** Thursday April 25th, 2013 in class.

If you choose to give your child permission to participate in this study, your child will receive points for class participation as well as have the opportunity to skip two in-class journal entries.

Sincerely,

Christopher R. Mc Allister, Music Teacher

APPENDIX B



The Graduate School at Liberty University

April 19, 2013

Christopher Ryan Mc Allister
IRB Approval 1563.041913: A Study of How Junior High Students'
Perception of Popular Music Affects Behavior in the Public School

Dear Christopher,

We are pleased to inform you that your above study has been approved by the Liberty IRB. This approval is extended to you for one year. If data collection proceeds past one year, or if you make changes in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update form to the IRB. The forms for these cases were attached to your approval email.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,

Fernando Garzon, Psy.D.
Professor, IRB Chair
Counseling

(434) 592-4054



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APPENDIX C

PARENT / GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM

Title of Study: A Study of How Junior-High Students' Perceive Popular Music Affects Behavior In The
Public School

Principal Investigator's Name: Christopher Mc Allister
Liberty University
Academic Department: Ethnomusicology

Dear Parent / Guardian,

I am currently conducting a study that hopes to discover how students in the public school think that popular music affects their behavior during school. Your child was selected as a possible participant because he or she attends a public school and is enrolled in the class "general music." I ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before giving permission for your child to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by: Christopher Mc Allister (Ethnomusicology Department at Liberty University).

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to find out how students in the public school think that popular music affects their behavior while in school.

Procedures:

If you agree to your child being in this study, I would ask your child to do the following things:

1. Complete a short questionnaire and
2. Be causally interviewed by Mr. Mc Allister to explain his/her answers on the questionnaire.

The estimated time to complete the questionnaire is five minutes. No more than ten minutes is expected to complete the interview. A total of fifteen minutes to complete both portions of the study is anticipated.

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study:

The risks of participating in this study are minimal and are no more than you would find in everyday life.

The benefit to participating in this study is that your child will be providing teachers, administrators, and researchers with valuable information that may help to provide a better educational environment to students in the future.

Compensation:

If you allow your child to participate in this study, your child will receive points for class participation as well as be given the opportunity to skip two in-class journal entries. If you decide not to allow your child to participate in this study, your child will be given an equal opportunity to receive these same incentives by completing a music theory worksheet packet.

Confidentiality:

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely and only researchers will have access to the records.

The privacy and confidentiality of the participants in this study is taken very seriously. Any data that is collected that may reveal the identity of individual participants will be kept in a locked drawer and accessed only by the principal investigator or his advisors. The data will be shredded after three years.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to allow your child to participate will not affect you or your child's current or future relations with Liberty University, Mr. Mc Allister, or Deposit Central School District. If you decide to allow your child to participate, you and your child are free to not answer any questions or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher conducting this study is Mr. Christopher Mc Allister under the advisement of Dr. George McDow. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact them at:

Christopher Mc Allister (Principal Investigator)
171 Second St.
Deposit, NY 13754
Ph: (607) 467-2197
E-mail: cmcallis@deposit.stier.org

Dr. George McDow (Research Advisor)
Ph: (434) 592-3875
E-mail: ghmcdow@liberty.edu

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd, Suite 1837, Lynchburg, VA 24502 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to allow my child to participate in the study.

Signature of parent or guardian: _____ Date: _____
Signature of Investigator: _____ Date: _____

IRB Code Numbers: 1563
IRB Expiration Date: April 19th, 2014

APPENDIX D

The Deposit CSD Code of Conduct is taken from the Deposit CSD Student/Faculty 2012-2013 handbook as distributed to students and faculty at the school. Used by permission.

Deposit Central School District CODE OF CONDUCT

Introduction

The Deposit Board of Education is committed to providing a safe and orderly school environment where students may receive and district personnel may deliver quality educational services without disruption or interference. Responsible behavior by students, teachers, other district personnel, parents and other visitors is essential to achieving this goal.

The district has a long-standing set of expectations for conduct on school property and at school functions. These expectations are based on the principles of civility, mutual respect, citizenship, character, tolerance, honesty and integrity.

The board recognizes the need to clearly define these expectations for acceptable conduct on school property, to identify the possible consequences of unacceptable conduct, and to ensure that discipline when necessary is administered promptly and fairly. To this end, the board adopts this code of conduct.

Unless otherwise indicated, this code applies to all students, school personnel, parents and other visitors when on school property or attending a school function.

II. Definitions

For purposes of this code, the following definitions apply.

“*Disruptive student*” means an elementary or secondary student under the age of 21 who is substantially disruptive of the educational process or substantially interferes with the teacher’s authority over the classroom or interferes with a bus driver’s ability to safely operate a school bus.

“*Parent*” means parent, guardian or person in parental relation to a student.

“*Employee*” means any person receiving compensation from a school district or employee of a contracted service provider or worker placed within the school under a public assistance employment program, pursuant to title nine-B of article five of the Social Services Law, and consistent with the provisions of such title for the provision of services to such district, its students or employees, directly or through contract, whereby such services performed by such persons involve direct student contact (Education Law §§11[4] and 1125[3]).

“*School property*” means in or within any building, structure, athletic playing field, playground, parking lot or land contained within the real property boundary line of a public elementary or secondary school, or in or on a school bus (Education Law § 11[1]). “*School Bus*” means every motor vehicle owned by a public or governmental agency or private school and operated for the transportation of pupils, children of pupils, teachers and other persons acting in a supervisory capacity, to or from school or school activities, or, privately owned and operated for compensation for the transportation of pupils, children of pupils, teachers and other persons acting in a supervisory capacity to or from school or school activities (Education Law §11[1] and Vehicle and Traffic Law §142).

“*School function*” means any school-sponsored extra-curricular event or activity (Education §11[2]).

“*Violent student*” means a student under the age of 21 who:

1. Commits an act of violence upon a school employee, or attempts to do so.

2. Commits, while on school property or at a school function, an act of violence upon another student or any other person lawfully on school property or at the school function, or attempts to do so.
3. Possesses, while on school property or at a school function, a weapon.
4. Displays, while on school property or at a school function, what appears to be a weapon.
5. Threatens, while on school property or at a school function, to use a weapon.
6. Knowingly and intentionally damages or destroys the personal property of any school employee or any person lawfully on school property or at a school function.
7. Knowingly and intentionally damages or destroys school district property.

“*Weapon*” means a firearm as defined in 18 USC Section 921 for purposes of the Gun-Free Schools Act. It also means any other gun, BB gun, pistol, revolver, shotgun, rifle, machine gun, disguised gun, dagger, dirk, razor, stiletto, pocketknife, switchblade knife, gravity knife, brass knuckles, sling shot, metal knuckle knife, box cutter, cane sword, electronic dart gun, Kung Fu star, electronic stun gun, pepper spray, or other noxious spray, explosive or incendiary bomb, or other device, instrument, material or substance that can cause physical injury or death when used to cause physical injury or death.

“*Disability*” means (a) a physical, mental or medical impairment resulting from anatomical, physiological, genetic or neurological conditions which prevents the exercise of a normal bodily function or is demonstrable by medically accepted clinical or laboratory diagnostic techniques or (b) a record of such an impairment or (c) a condition regarded by others as such an impairment, provided, however, that in all provisions of this article dealing with employment, the term must be limited to disabilities which, upon the provision of reasonable accommodations, do not prevent the complainant from performing in a reasonable manner the activities involved in the job or occupation sought or held (Education Law §11[4] and Executive Law §292[21]).

“*Harassment*” means the creation of a hostile environment by conduct, with or by verbal threats, intimidation or abuse that has or would have the effect of unreasonably and substantially interfering with a student’s educational performance, opportunities or benefits, or mental, emotional or physical well-being; or conduct, verbal threats, intimidation or abuse that reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause a student to fear for his or her physical safety; the harassing behavior may be based on a person’s actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sex, sexual orientation or gender (identity or expression) (Education Law §11[7]).

“*Sexual orientation*” means actual or perceived heterosexuality, homosexuality or bisexuality (Education Law §11[5]).

“*Gender*” means actual or perceived sex and shall include a person’s gender identity or expression (Education Law §11[6]).

“*Hazing*” is a form of harassment which involves committing an act against a student or coercing a student into committing an act that creates a risk of or causes emotional, physical, psychological harm to a person, in order for the student to be initiated or affiliated with a student or other organization, or for any other purpose. Consent or acquiescence is no defense to hazing: i.e., the implied or expressed consent of a person or persons to hazing shall not be a defense to discipline under this policy.

“*Bullying*” is a form of harassment that consists of inappropriate and often persistent behavior including threats or intimidation of others, treating others cruelly, terrorizing, coercing, or habitual put-downs and or badgering of others.

Bullying occurs when someone purposely says or does mean or hurtful things to another person who has a hard time defending oneself or is in an otherwise vulnerable position.

“*Cyber-bullying*” refers to any harassment/bullying, on or off school property, which occurs via the internet, cell phones or other electronic devices.

“*Sexting*” refers to an act of sending sexually explicit photos, images, text messages, or e-mails by using a cell phone or other electronic device.

III. Dignity Act Coordinators

At least one employee in every school shall be designated as a Dignity Act Coordinator and instructed in the provisions of this subdivision and thoroughly trained in methods to respond to human relations in the areas of race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender and sex.

1. The designation of each Dignity Act Coordinator shall be approved by the XYZ Central School District Board of Education.
2. The name(s) and contact information for the Dignity Act Coordinator(s) shall be shared with all school personnel, students, and persons in parental relation, which shall include, but is not limited to, providing the name, designated school and contact information of each Dignity Act Coordinator by:
 - a. Listing such information in the code of conduct and updates posted on the Internet web site of the XYZ Central School District.
 - b. Including such information in the plain language summary of the code of conduct provided to all persons in parental relation to students before the beginning of each school year, pursuant to 8 NYCRR 100.2(I)(2)(iii)(b)(3);
 - c. Include such information in at least one district or school mailing per school year to parents and persons of parental relation and, if such information changes, in at least one subsequent district or school mailing as soon as practicable thereafter;
 - d. Posting such information in highly-visible areas of school buildings; and
 - e. Making such information available at the district and school-level administrative offices.
3. In the event a Dignity Act Coordinator vacates his or her position, another school employee shall be immediately designated for an interim appointment as Coordinator, pending approval of a successor Coordinator by the applicable governing body as set forth in subparagraph (i) of this paragraph within 30 days of the date the position was vacated. In the event a Coordinator is unable to perform the duties of his or her position for an extended period of time, another school employee shall be immediately designated for an interim appointment as Coordinator, pending return of the previous Coordinator to his or her duties as Coordinator.

IV. Dignity for All Training

Commencing in the 2012-13 school year and continuing in each school year thereafter, the following Dignity for All school employee training program regulations are to be implement in effort to promote a positive school environment that is free from discrimination and harassment and to discourage and respond to incidents of discrimination and/or harassment on school property or at a school function.

1. Training is to be conducted for all instructional and non-instructional employees of the XYZ Central School District
2. Training is to raise awareness and sensitivity to potential acts of discrimination or harassment directed at students by students or school employees on school property or at school functions; including by not limited to, discrimination or harassment based on a person's actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practices, disability, sexual orientation, gender or sex.
3. Training is to raise awareness and sensitivity to potential acts of discrimination and harassment through cyberbullying/texting.
4. Training is to enable employees to prevent and respond to incidents of discrimination and harassment
5. Training is to include guidelines relating to the development of nondiscriminatory instructional and counseling methods.
6. Training is to be conducted as needed and may be implemented and conducted in conjunction with existing professional development.

V. Students Rights and Responsibilities

A. Student Bill of Rights

The district is committed to safeguarding the rights given to all students under state and federal law and to provide students with a safe school climate focused on positive behavior. In addition, to promote a safe, healthy, orderly and civil school environment, all district students have the right to:

1. Take part in all district activities on an equal basis regardless of race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender and sex.
2. Present their version of the relevant events to school personnel authorized to impose a disciplinary penalty in connection with the imposition of the penalty.
3. Access school rules and receive an explanation of those rules in an age appropriate manner on at least an annual basis from school personnel.

B. Student Responsibilities

All district students have the responsibility to:

1. Contribute to maintaining a safe and orderly school environment that is conducive to learning and to show respect to other persons and property.
2. Be familiar with and abide by all district policies, rules and regulations dealing with student conduct.
3. Attend school every day unless they are legally excused and be in class, on time, and prepared to learn.
4. Work to the best of their ability in all academic and extracurricular pursuits and strive toward their highest level of achievement possible.
5. React to direction given by teachers, administrators and other school personnel in a respectful, positive manner.
6. Work to develop mechanisms to control their anger.
7. Ask questions when they do not understand.
8. Seek help in solving problems that might lead to discipline.
9. Dress according to the Code of Conduct for school and school functions.
10. Accept responsibility for their actions.
11. Report infractions of the Code of Conduct, including but not limited to instances of discrimination or harassment.
12. Conduct themselves as representatives of the district when participating in or attending school-sponsored extracurricular events and to hold themselves to the highest standards of conduct, demeanor and sportsmanship.

VI. Essential Partners

A. Parents

All parents are expected to:

1. Recognize that the education of their children is a joint responsibility of the parents and the school community.
2. Send their children to school ready to participate and learn.
3. Ensure their children attend school regularly and on time.
4. Ensure absences are excused.
5. Insist their children be dressed and groomed in a manner consistent with the student dress code.
6. Help their children understand that in a democratic society appropriate rules are required to maintain a safe, orderly environment.
7. Know school rules and help their children understand them.
8. Convey to their children a supportive attitude toward education and the district.
9. Build good relationships with all school personnel, other parents and their children's friends.
10. Help their children deal effectively with peer pressure.
11. Report infractions of the Code of Conduct, including but not limited to instances of discrimination or harassment.
12. Inform school officials of changes in the home situation that may affect student conduct or performance.

13. Provide a place for study and ensure homework assignments are completed.

B. Cafeteria Staff

1. Maintain a climate of mutual respect and dignity for all students regardless of actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender or sex, which will strengthen students' confidence and promote learning.
2. Create and maintain a kitchen/dining area that is clean and safe.
3. Provide a selection of food that will encourage the students to eat a healthy and nutritious meal.
4. Encourage students to conduct themselves in such a manner that will produce an atmosphere that is appropriate for dining.
5. Confront issues of discrimination and harassment committed against students by employees or students or any situation that threatens the emotional or physical health or safety of any student, school employee or any person who is lawfully on school property or at a school function.
6. Address personal biases that may prevent equal treatment of all students in the school or classroom setting.
7. Report infractions of the Code of Conduct, including but not limited to instances of discrimination or harassment.

C. Transportation/Custodial Staff

1. Maintain a climate of mutual respect and dignity for all students regardless of actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender or sex, which will strengthen students' confidence and promote learning.
2. Provide a clean and healthy environment for the entire school community in all buildings, buses and on school property.
3. Maintain and promote safety in all areas of their jurisdiction.
4. Inform supervisors and/or administrators of any area of concern that might jeopardize the health and safety of any student or staff member.
5. Confront issues of discrimination and harassment committed against students by employees or students or any situation that threatens the emotional or physical health or safety of any student, school employee or any person who is lawfully on school property or at a school function.
6. Address personal biases that may prevent equal treatment of all students in the school or classroom setting.
7. Report infractions of the Code of Conduct, including but not limited to instances of discrimination or harassment.

D. Support Staff

1. Maintain a climate of mutual respect and dignity for all students regardless of actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender or sex, which will strengthen students' confidence and promote learning.
2. Assist in maintaining a climate that is conducive to teaching and learning.
3. Provide support and assistance to the staff that will enable them to do their job more efficiently and effectively.
4. Provide support and assistance to the students that will enable them to obtain the maximum benefits from their educational program.
5. Confront issues of discrimination and harassment committed against students by employees or students or any situation that threatens the emotional or physical health or safety of any student, school employee or any person who is lawfully on school property or at a school function.
6. Address personal biases that may prevent equal treatment of all students in the school or classroom setting.
7. Report infractions of the Code of Conduct, including but not limited to instances of discrimination or harassment.

E. Teachers

All district teachers are expected to:

1. Maintain a climate of mutual respect and dignity for all students regardless of actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender or sex, which will strengthen students' confidence and promote learning.

2. Be prepared to teach.
3. Demonstrate interest in teaching and concern for student achievement.
4. Know school policies and rules, and enforce them in a fair and consistent manner.
5. Communicate to students and parents:
 - a. Course objectives and requirements
 - b. Marking/grading procedures
 - c. Assignment deadlines
 - d. Expectations for students
 - e. Classroom discipline plan
6. Communicate regularly with students, parents and other teachers concerning growth and achievement.
7. Confront issues of discrimination and harassment committed against students by employees or students or any situation that threatens the emotional or physical health or safety of any student, school employee or any person who is lawfully on school property or at a school function.
8. Address personal biases that may prevent equal treatment of all students in the school or classroom setting.
9. Report infractions of the Code of Conduct, including but not limited to instances of discrimination or harassment.

F. School Counselors/Social Workers/Psychologists

1. Maintain a climate of mutual respect and dignity for all students regardless of actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender or sex, which will strengthen students' confidence and promote learning.
2. Assist students in coping with peer pressure and emerging personal, social and emotional problems.
3. Initiate teacher/student/counselor conferences and parent/teacher/student/counselor conferences, as necessary, as a way to resolve problems.
4. Regularly review with students their educational progress and career plans.
5. Provide information to assist students with career planning.
6. Encourage students to benefit from the curriculum and extracurricular programs.
7. Confront issues of discrimination and harassment committed against students by employees or students or any situation that threatens the emotional or physical health or safety of any student, school employee or any person who is lawfully on school property or at a school function.
8. Address personal biases that may prevent equal treatment of all students in the school or classroom setting.
9. Report infractions of the Code of Conduct, including but not limited to instances of discrimination or harassment.

G. Building Level Administrators

1. Maintain a climate of mutual respect and dignity for all students regardless of actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender or sex, which will strengthen students' confidence and promote learning.
2. Promote a safe, orderly and stimulating school environment, supporting active teaching and learning.
3. Ensure that students and staff have the opportunity to communicate regularly with the principal and approach the principal for redress of grievances.
4. Evaluate on a regular basis all instructional programs.
5. Support the development of and student participation in appropriate extracurricular activities.
6. Confront issues of discrimination and harassment committed against students by employees or students or any situation that threatens the emotional or physical health or safety of any student, school employee or any person who is lawfully on school property or at a school function.
7. Address personal biases that may prevent equal treatment of all students in the school or classroom setting.
8. Be responsible for enforcing the code of conduct and ensuring that all cases are resolved promptly and fairly.

H. District Level Administrators

1. Maintain a climate of mutual respect and dignity for all students regardless of actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender or sex, which will strengthen students' confidence and promote learning.
2. Promote a safe, orderly and stimulating school environment, supporting active teaching and learning.
3. Review with other administrators the policies of the Board of Education and state and federal laws relating to school operations and management.
4. Inform the board about educational trends relating to student discipline.
5. Work to create instructional programs that minimize problems of misconduct and are sensitive to student and teacher needs.
6. Confront issues of discrimination and harassment committed against students by employees or students or any situation that threatens the emotional or physical health or safety of any student, school employee or any person who is lawfully on school property or at a school function.
7. Address personal biases that may prevent equal treatment of all students in the school or classroom setting.
8. Work with other administrators in enforcing the code of conduct and ensuring that all cases are resolved promptly and fairly.

I. Board of Education

1. Collaborate with student, teacher, administrator, and parent organizations, school safety personnel and other school personnel to develop a code of conduct that clearly defines expectations for the conduct of students, district personnel and visitors on school property and at school functions.
2. Adopt and review at least annually the district's code of conduct to evaluate the code's effectiveness and the fairness and consistency of its implementation.
3. Lead by example by conducting board meetings in a professional, respectful, courteous manner.

Student Dress Code

All students are expected to give proper attention to personal cleanliness and to dress appropriately for school and school functions.

A student's dress, grooming and appearance, including hair style/color, jewelry, make-up and nails, shall:

1. Be safe, appropriate and not disrupt or interfere with the educational process.
2. Recognize that extremely brief garments including but not limited to short shorts, tube tops, net tops, halter tops, spaghetti straps, plunging necklines (front and/or back) and see-through garments will not be tolerated.
3. Ensure that under-garments are completely covered with outer clothing.
4. Include footwear at all times. Footwear that is a safety hazard will not be allowed.
5. Not include headwear in the building except for a medical or religious purpose.
6. Not include "dog" neck and wrist collars.
7. Not include items that are vulgar, obscene, and libelous or denigrate others on account of race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender and sex.
8. Not promote and/or endorse the use of alcohol, tobacco or illegal drugs and/or encourage other illegal or violent activities.
9. Not include the wearing of long leather or trench coats of any color.

Students who violate the student dress code shall be required to change or cover the offending item, failure to do so may result in discipline.

Prohibited Student Conduct

A student may be subject to disciplinary action when he/she behaves in a manner which is:

1. disorderly, that is:
 - a. fighting, assaulting or behaving violently,
 - b. threatening another with bodily harm,

- c. harassment, bullying, or intimidating students or school personnel (BOE policies: Non-Discrimination and Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Bullying/Harassment Prevention and Intervention)
 - d. making unreasonable noise,
 - e. being untruthful with school personnel or making false reports,
 - f. possessing electronic devices such as, but not limited to: video/audio players & recorders, remote controls, electronic games, beepers, pagers, cellular phones,
 - g. obstructing vehicular or pedestrian traffic,
 - h. driving recklessly,
 - i. creating a hazardous or physically offensive condition by an act which serves no legitimate purpose,
 - j. loitering or trespassing
 - k. being present on or entering into any school property, function, or vehicle without authorization
 - l. disrupts or is reasonably likely to disrupt the educational process or school operations, or is
2. insubordinate, that is, failing to comply with the lawful directions of teachers, school administrators or other school employees in charge of the student; bus drivers, bus monitors and bus aides, law enforcement officers or
3. engages in any of the following forms of academic misconduct:
- a. tardiness,
 - b. missing or leaving school or class without permission or excuse,
 - c. cheating, plagiarism, copyright/trademark violations or assisting another in such conduct
 - d. improperly altering documents or records.
4. endangers the safety, health, morals, or welfare of themselves or others by any act, including but not limited to:
- a. fighting, assaulting or behaving violently, threatening another with bodily harm,
 - b. harassment or illegal discrimination, which includes the use of race, color, weight, creed, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, sex, gender, sexual orientation or disability as a basis for treating another in a negative manner. (Non Discrimination and Anti-Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Bullying/Harassment Prevention and Intervention)
 - c. bullying
 - d. cyber-bullying
 - e. sexting
 - f. making unreasonable noise,
 - g. possession, use, distribution, transfer or sale of tobacco or tobacco products, alcohol, drugs or other controlled substances, drug paraphernalia or synthetic cannabinoid products including but not limited to incense herbal mixture potpourri
 - h. possession, use, or sale of weapons, fireworks, or other dangerous or prohibited objects or contraband. Dangerous objects include, but are not limited to: guns, starter pistols, knives of any kind (including all types of pocket knives), razors, box cutters, clubs, metal knuckles, nunchucks, Kung Fu stars, explosives, and any instrument, article or substance, which under the circumstances in which it is used, attempted to be used or threatened to be used, is readily capable of causing death or other serious physical injury. Any object that resembles a dangerous object (such as a fake gun) will be considered a prohibited object,
 - i. using obscene, profane, lewd, vulgar or abusive language or behavior,
 - j. possession, sale, distribution, transfer or use of lewd or obscene materials,
 - k. gambling,
 - l. hazing,
 - m. extortion,
 - n. theft,
 - o. vandalism, willfully defacing, damaging or destroying school property or vehicles used by entities under contract with the district to provide services for the district. Willfully defacing, vandalizing, damaging or destroying the property of others on school premises, at school functions or on school buses under contract to the district, or

- p. misuse of school information technology or other school property (BOE Internet Protection Policy).
- 5. engages in conduct that violates Board’s rules and regulations for the maintenance of public order on school property in the Public Conduct on School Property section or Federal, State or local laws.

Definition of Bullying

“Bullying” is a form of harassment that consists of inappropriate and often persistent behavior including threats or intimidation of others, treating others cruelly, terrorizing, coercing, or habitual put-downs and or badgering of others.

Bullying occurs when someone purposely says or does mean or hurtful things to another person who has a hard time defending oneself or is in an otherwise vulnerable position.

District Bully Prevention Rules:

- Rule 1:** We will not bully others.
 - Rule 2:** We will try to help students who are bullied.
 - Rule 3:** We will try to include students who are left out.
 - Rule 4:** If we know that somebody is being bullied, we will tell an adult at school and an adult at home
- Olweus Bully Prevention Program*

Different forms or kinds of bullying may include:

- Verbal bullying, being socially excluded or isolated, being physically bullied, being bullied through lies or false rumors, having money or other items taken or damaged, being threatened or forced to do things, racial bullying, sexual bullying, and cyber-bullying

Reporting Procedures

Students are to report any incidents of discrimination, harassment, bullying, cyber-bullying, hazing, or sexting by completing a “Harassment/Bullying Prevention Form”. These forms are located in the school library, the guidance office and in the buildings main office. Forms can also be accessed and completed online on the District’s homepage. Forms can be deposited into any specified drop boxes in the building or turned into the main office. Online forms can be e-mailed directly to the appropriate building administrator.

Dignity Act Coordinator

The Board of Education has designated the following individual as the Dignity Act Coordinator who has been thoroughly trained to handle human relations in the areas of race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender and sex. This person will serve as a resource and be responsible for the oversight of investigatory procedures of all allegations of bullying. The Dignity Act Coordinator can be contacted at:

Beatrice Bailey
 171 Second Street, Deposit NY
 607-467-2198, bbailey@deposit.stier.org

Off campus & Non-School Day Misconduct

Students may be disciplined for violations of school district policies and the Code of Conduct when there is a connection to or impact, effect on school students, personnel, activities, functions or property. Examples of misconduct include but are not limited to: cyber-bullying, sexting, threatening or harassing students or school personnel through the use of electronic devices.

Disciplinary Penalties, Procedures and Referrals

In determining the appropriate disciplinary action, school personnel authorized to impose disciplinary penalties will consider the following:

1. The student’s age.
2. The nature of the offense and the circumstances which led to the offense.

3. The student's prior disciplinary record.
4. The effectiveness of other forms of discipline.
5. Information from parents, teachers and/or others, as appropriate.
6. Other extenuating circumstances.

Penalties

Students who are found to have violated the district's code of conduct may be subject to the following penalties, either alone or in combination.

1. Oral warning
2. Written warning
3. Oral and written notification to parent
4. Detention
5. Suspension from transportation
6. Suspension from athletic participation
7. Suspension from social or extracurricular activities
8. Suspension of other privileges
9. In-school suspension or exclusion from a particular class
10. Removal from classroom by teacher or principal
11. Short-term (five days or less) suspension from school
12. Long-term (more than five days) suspension from school
13. Permanent suspension from school

Remedial Consequences

Remedial responses which may be utilized for, but not limited to, instances of discrimination and harassment of students by students and/or employees may include:

1. Peer support groups; corrective instruction or other relevant learning or service experience;
2. Supportive intervention;
3. Behavioral assessment or evaluation;
4. Behavioral management plans, with benchmarks that are closely monitored;
5. Student counseling and parent conferences.

Minimum Periods of Suspension

1. Students who bring a firearm to school will be subject to suspension for one calendar year unless otherwise determined by the superintendent.
2. Students who commit other violent acts (including bringing a weapon, other than a firearm to school) shall be subject to suspension from school for at least five days unless otherwise determined by the superintendent.
3. Students who are repeatedly, substantially disruptive of the educational process or repeatedly substantially interferes with the teachers authority over the classroom will be suspended for at least five days. For purposes of the code of conduct, "repeatedly, substantially disruptive" means engaging in conduct that results in the student being removed from the classroom pursuant to educational law 3214 (3)(a) and this code on multiple occasions.

Referrals

1. Counseling
The Guidance Office shall handle all referrals of students to counseling.
2. PINS Petitions
The district may file a PINS (person in need of supervision) petition in Family Court on any student under the age of 18 who demonstrates that he or she requires supervision and treatment by:
 - a. Being habitually truant and not attending school as required by part one in Article 65 of the Education Law.
 - b. Engaging in an ongoing or continual course of conduct which makes the student ungovernable or habitually disobedient and beyond the lawful control of the school.
 - c. Knowingly and unlawfully possesses marijuana in violation of Penal Law Section 221.05. A single violation of Section 221.05 will be a sufficient basis for filing a PINS petition.
3. Juvenile Delinquents and Juvenile Offenders

The superintendent is required to refer the following students to the County Attorney for a Juvenile delinquency proceeding before the Family Court:

- a. Any student under the age of 16 who is found to have brought a weapon to school, or
- b. Any student 14 or 15 years old who qualifies for juvenile offender status under the Criminal Procedure Law Section 1.20(42)

The superintendent is required to refer students age 16 and older or any student 14 or 15 years old who qualifies for juvenile offender status to the appropriate law enforcement authorities.

Visitors to the School

All visitors must report to the school office or other designated individual to request a visitor's pass to be allowed further access to the building unless previously invited to a classroom or assembly program.

Members of the School District staff will treat parents and other members of the public with respect and expect the same in return. The District must keep schools and administrative offices free from disruptions and prevent unauthorized persons from entering school/district grounds.

1. **Disruptive Individual Must Leave School Grounds.** Any individual who disrupts or threatens to disrupt school/ office operations/events, threatens the health and safety of students or staff will be directed by the school's principal or other person in charge to leave school, School District property, or event promptly. If the person does not comply law enforcement authorities will be called. Future access to school property or events may be restricted.
2. **Directions to Staff in Dealing with Abusive Individual.** If any member of the public uses obscenities or speaks in a demanding, loud, insulting, and/or demeaning manner, the administrator or employee to whom the remarks are directed will warn the speaker to communicate civilly, a failure to do so could result in a request to leave or end the contact. If the individual does not stop the abusive behavior, the District employee will verbally notify the individual that the meeting, conference, or telephone conversation is terminated. If on school premises, failure to comply may result in the individual being directed to leave and/or law enforcement may be notified.
3. **Provide Policy and Report Incident.** When a staff member determines that a member of the public is in the process of violating the provisions of this policy, the staff member should direct the person to the building administrator, or other school official in charge, who should provide a written copy of this policy at the time of occurrence.

Public Conduct on School Property

All persons on school property or attending a school function shall conduct themselves in a respectful and orderly manner. In addition, all persons on school property or attending a school function are expected to be properly attired for the purpose they are on school property.

Prohibited Conduct

No person, either singly or in concert with others, shall:

1. Willfully cause physical injury to any other person, or threaten to do so for the purpose of compelling or inducing such other person to refrain from any act which he has a lawful right to do, or do any act which he has a lawful right not to do.
2. Physically restrain or detain any other person, or remove such person from any place where he is authorized to remain.
3. Willfully damage or destroy property of the district or of the school personnel or students, or remove or use such property without authorization.
4. Without permission, express or implied, enter into any private office of an administrative officer, faculty member or staff member.
5. Other than student, employee or Board member, enter a classroom or the building beyond the administrative office without written permission of the superintendent or his designee.
6. Enter upon and remain in any building or facility for any purpose other than for authorized uses, or in such manner as to obstruct its authorized use by others.
7. Without authorization, remain in any building or facility after it is normally closed.

8. Refuse to leave any building or facility after being requested to do so by an authorized administrator.
9. Deliberately disrupt or prevent the peaceful and orderly conduct of classes, school programs, school activities, lectures and meetings, or deliberately interfere with any person who desires to express his views, including invited speakers.
10. Have in his possession upon any premises to which these rules apply, any knife, shotgun, pistol, revolver, or other firearm or weapon without the written authorization of the superintendent, whether or not a license to possess the same has been issued to such person.
11. Smoke tobacco, possess, consume or exchange or be under the influence of alcoholic beverages, drugs or narcotics on school properties.
12. Distribute or post any written material, pamphlet or poster without the prior written approval of the superintendent.
13. Urge or incite others to commit any of the acts herein prohibited.
14. Violate the traffic laws, regulations or other restrictions on vehicles.
15. Intimidate, harass or discriminate against any person on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender or sex.

Penalties

A person who shall violate any of the provisions of these rules shall:

1. If he is a licensee or invitee, have his authorization to remain upon the district property withdrawn, and shall be directed to leave the premises. In the event of his failure or refusal to do so, he shall be subject to ejection and arrest.
2. If he is a trespasser or visitor without specific license or invitation, be subject to ejection and arrest.
3. If he is a student, be subject to suspension or such lesser disciplinary action as the facts of the case may warrant.
4. If he is a faculty member, be guilty of misconduct and be subject to dismissal or termination of his employment or such lesser disciplinary action as the facts may warrant, including suspension without pay or censure.
5. If he is a staff member entitled to the benefits of Civil Service Law Section 75, be guilty of misconduct and subject to the penalties prescribed in said section.
6. If he is a staff member, not entitled to the benefits of Civil Service Law Section 75, be guilty of misconduct and be subject to dismissal or termination of his employment or such lesser disciplinary action as the facts may warrant, including suspension without pay or censure.

APPENDIX E

Hi Chris:

I have no problem with your using our MS/HS code of conduct in your thesis paper.

Permission is granted for Christopher Mc Allister to include the Deposit Central School District code of conduct in his Master's Thesis.

Theresa

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KIDS FIRST

Our leadership team core values:

Excellence, Integrity, Respect and Fun

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